

not wanting for company

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not wanting for company

by [gildedhorns](#)

Summary

“Have you ever been interested in anyone, Satsuki?”

As soon as the question leaves her mouth Ryuko regrets having asked it. Because as much as they've been trying these past couple of months the truth of the matter is they're not normal sisters, and they don't come from a normal family.

(post graduation)

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

“Psst Satsuki. Do ya-“

“I see them.”

Ryuko chuckled.

From their vantage point on Ryuko and Mako’s third floor apartment, the sisters were watching Iori and Inumuta talking animatedly in the building’s parking lot. The boys had come over to say goodbye one last time before departing for the start of term. The pair drew to a halt outside their car and a tiny Inumuta bent down to place a peck on the top of even tinier Iori’s head. From her perch, Ryuko let out a woop.

“I fucking knew it!”

Satsuki rolled her eyes and sat down on the apartment’s couch, picking up a magazine disinterestedly.

“It’s hardly a surprise, Ryuko. Iori has never been attracted to women. And just because Inumuta’s a computer genius doesn’t mean he always has the brains to delete his internet history.”

Ryuko gawks in mock admonition, “Spying on your subordinates, Kiryuin?”

“Says the woman dangling over the windowsill with a pair of binoculars,” she flips a page, “why do you have those anyways?”

Ryuko tosses the offending item over her shoulder, and plonks down beside Satsuki, “Don’t go changing the subject, sis.”

“Being well-informed is hardly spying, Ryuko.”

Ryuko makes a face and kicks her sister in the thigh. Not taking an eye off her page Satsuki swings her legs up on the couch and stretches as obnoxiously far as possible, jamming Ryuko into the opposite corner.

“Hey - *rude!*” Ryuko strains back, pushing with her feet, but Satsuki’s knees are locked and she won’t give an inch. Ryuko’s efforts at reclaiming her territory are futile, and after a few bouts she grudgingly settles for one seat cushion while Satsuki sits smugly with two.

They fall into a comfortable silence. For the longest time there’s not a sound save for the occasional flipping of a page, and the hum of the airconditioner. Ryuko stares at the ceiling. She smiles.

“This is so fucking weird.”

“Hm?”

"I mean weird in a mundane kinda good way, but still fucking weird," Ryuko scratches her head, "I don't think anyone was planning to live past New Year's and now everyone's hooking up. Me and Mako, now Iori and Inumuta. Shit."

"It certainly is fortuitous." Satsuki fingers the magazine's cover adding softly, "This is certainly better than any best case scenario I'd ever taken into account."

Ryuko knows she probably shouldn't broach the subject. She probably shouldn't but she's curious, and hey, it wouldn't be an unusual question for sisters to ask (*isn't that what they are now? normal sisters?*) so Ryuko goes ahead anyways.

"Have you ever been interested in anyone, Satsuki?"

As soon as the question leaves her mouth Ryuko regrets having asked it. Because as much as they've been trying these past couple of months the truth of the matter is they're not normal sisters, and they don't come from a normal family.

Satsuki doesn't answer immediately, but when she does her words are clipped.

"Not particularly."

Ryuko wishes her third of the couch would swallow her up right there and then. The lighthearted mood that had been upon them ever Iori and Inumuta's visit had vanished.

Satsuki closes the magazine on her lap, pursing her lips. The question, she must admit, had caught her off guard. Even though she'd told Ryuko not to worry about broaching certain subjects, her sister had tried to steer clear of them anyways. She had been grateful for Ryuko's tact, but simultaneously didn't want people tiptoeing around her for the rest of her life.

(*"You of all people should know I'm not made of glass"*.)

Satsuki glances at Ryuko who was currently avoiding her gaze and slumping impossibly deep into the plush couch cushions. Satsuki bit the inside of her lip.

This wasn't the first time their conversations had stopped dead in their tracks. For the most part Ryuko and Satsuki got along well, but there would be instances – a thoughtless phrase, a figure of speech - that triggered some invisible switch in the room. Just like that a heaviness would grow in the air; a pall, a chill, a ghostly presence that choked off conversation before it could even reach the lips.

(*She always did thrive on silence, didn't she. Everyone knew, but no one spoke.*)

Satsuki is sick to death of the silence so she keeps talking.

"I don't think I'd be interested in anyone even without Ragyo."

Now that she'd put a name to the ghost, her presence in the room seemed to dissipate. Ryuko seemed to perk up at the knowledge she hadn't hurt her sister, and curiously leaned into Satsuki's couch territory.

“How d’you mean?”

“Romance has never interested me, not even in an abstract, hypothetical way. It’s not that it’s painful, it’s just that the desire simply isn’t there.”

Ryuko draws her legs up and crosses them, an apologetic look on her face, “I mean, jeez sis, I can’t blame you for feeling that way. I’m no expert on this kind of stuff but I’m pretty sure there are doctors for that sort of thing, if you wanna look into it. Maybe Mr. Mankanshoku knows a back-alley therapist you could talk to.”

A stony look.

“I’m joking about the last part. The back-alley part, anyways.”

Satsuki sighs, “How can I put this, Ryuko. You love Mako, don’t you?”

“Of course I do.”

“Even after you were violated with Junketsu, the feelings you have towards Mankanshoku are still there. They haven’t disappeared – in fact, they’re probably stronger than ever now.”

Ryuko grimaced at the mention of Junketsu. She still wasn’t certain if what had transpired during her captivity was a dream or reality, but the memories of whatever had happened only seemed to resurface in the bedroom. There were times when Mako’s gentle touches were unbearable, and sent Ryuko into a cold sweat, but those times were few and far between. Mako would always weather those episodes with her, anchoring her until they passed.

“Yeah,” Ryuko mumbled, “what happened sucks, but it’d never keep me away from Mako.”

“You’ve been subjected to a horrific experience that no one should have been made to endure and yet you and your affections for the slacker have made it through hale and whole,” Satsuki folded her arms confidently, “Your desire to be with her supersedes any pain it may cost you. For me there was no desire to speak of in the first place; romantic or otherwise.”

“But - that’s not really-”

Satsuki raised an eyebrow at her sister who was currently doing her best impression of a fish out of water.

“But what, Matoi? I really don’t understand what is so hard to grasp.”

“It’s not the same!”

Satsuki blinked, taken aback by the anger that had sprung from Ryuko’s voice.

“I had feelings for Mako before *that* happened! You – you weren’t even given a chance in the first place. You were just a kid. How could you know you’d never *want* anyone when you were never given a choice - when *she* took that choice away from you?” Ryuko’s voice cracked, and tears sprung to her eyes, “I fucking hate that woman.”

“Ryuko...”

Hearing her sister speaking so plainly, her voice welling with emotion would never cease to be a surreal experience for Satsuki. The elite four had known about her situation with her mother, but she had forbidden them from talking about it at any length. (There was nothing they could have done about it anyways, and doing so would have destroyed the plan she'd spent her life orchestrating). The four had stood by her side, strong and sure, picking her up whenever she stumbled, covering her when she was left naked, but they had always done so silently. Ryuko, so new to her circle, vocalized questions and initiated conversations she'd only ever gone over in her own mind, and had never dreamed of actually saying out loud. It was a strange novelty, but one that was exhausting at times as well.

Satsuki sighed, “Ryuko, please don’t cry. It’s over and done with.”

Ryuko huffs angrily – it’s a wet, unconvinced sound.

“Ryuko – I’ll never know for certain what kind of person I would have been if Ragyo hadn’t been in my life. I’m never going to know so there’s no point in wallowing in sadness, wondering what could have been. I have to make do with the life I’ve been given.”

Ryuko’s eyes welled with tears once more. Her muscles stood out along her neck, the fighter inside her coiling at the thought of a battle she’d long since missed.

“Please don’t be upset. Ragyo has taken many things from me but this was never one of them.”

“It’s not fair.” Ryuko grinds out miserably.

“I don’t need that kind of love to be happy. I’m happy with your company, Ryuko. You, Mako, the Four, Iori, and Soroi. That’s all I need.”

Satsuki reaches out and takes Ryuko’s hand, as if to demonstrate. She rubs the back of her fingers with the pad of her thumb and Ryuko squeezes back tightly in return.

“If Ragyo had taken *that* away from me, then I would be unhappy. If holding your hand filled me with revulsion, I don’t think I would be able to live like that.” Satsuki says softly.

Ryuko whimpers low in her throat, and holds onto her even harder. The anger and helplessness that had seized her so suddenly now loosed their grip with every circuit of Satsuki’s thumb.

“Do you want a tissue?”

“It’s alright I got it.” Ryuko wipes her eyes with her sleeves, and takes a tissue when Satsuki offers one anyways.

When Ryuko’s breathing finally slows and her shaking stills Satsuki looks up into her face and Ryuko matches her evenly. The pain in the transfer student’s eyes still glows, dull and deep, but a new understanding is shining there as well.

Ryuko leans over to pull her sister into a bear hug, and Satsuki returns it with equal strength. The couch creaks with the force of it.

When Satsuki leaves ("Nonon's expecting me for dinner – she misses me and the Four but she'll never admit it") Ryuko catches her on the threshold, hand at the crook of her arm.

"Mako and I are going shopping downtown tomorrow. She says I need a change of wardrobe or something - no idea what she's talking about. Wanna come with?"

Satsuki doesn't take very much time to consider it.

"I'd like that very much."

Ryuko beams at her.

End Notes

I've always seen Satsuki as asexual/aromantic and I wanted to write a fic that centered around that. Obv we're skating around some potentially troublesome territory here – I didn't want to necessarily make her asexuality a Ragyo-dealt wound or anything of that nature, but I still thought it was important to talk about her abusive history in conjunction with that.

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